

Reporting Person: Sgt. John L. Datta/ 237

Date: 09/18/00

Case Title: Death Investigation - Cape Smythe Plane Crash in Nuiqsut

INITIAL DETAILS:

On September 18, 2000, at approximately 1511 hours, dispatch reported that a Cape Smythe flight had crashed in Nuiqsut and requested that I come downstairs from my office.

INVESTIGATION:

I contacted dispatcher, Monica Grimes, in the dispatch center and overheard Officer Kelly Turney, on the radio, in Nuiqsut advise that they needed Search & Rescue planes to respond to Nuiqsut as they had survivors from the plane crash and four fatalities that he could see at that point.

I was instructed by Lt. Grimes that myself, and one other officer, would be going to Search & Rescue to respond to Nuiqsut and assist at the scene. Officer Kevin Early and myself gathered our belongings and responded to the Search & Rescue hanger. We then flew with Search & Rescue via King Air to the village of Nuiqsut. We arrived in Nuiqsut at approximately 1640 hours.

Upon our arrival, I met with Officers Brad Munn and Kelly Turney who advised the deceased individuals were still at the plane crash site, and the survivors had been transported to the clinic and were being treated. I was also advised that Alpine Security personnel were monitoring the airplane tarmac and were not allowing anyone to go to the crash site.

We then went to the Nuiqsut Police Station to coordinate an action plan. I was further briefed by both officers as to what they knew at this point. Present in the briefing was Officers Turney, Munn, Early, me and FAA representative Cary J. Meier. Officer Early was instructed to respond to the scene, helping to secure the crash site, take photos, and measurements. Officer Munn was instructed to contact the survivors of the crash and attempt to interview them. Officer Turney was instructed to contact the witnesses that were present at the airport tarmac when the plane attempted to land and eventually crashed. Both officers advised me that the plane had come in from the northeast end of the landing strip and had crashed near the southwest end of the landing strip, a few hundred yards off the strip.

I secured a video camera from the police station and made contact with the manager of Alpine, Craig Dotson. He stated that his personnel and equipment were at our disposal for use to help with this incident. I explained that I would like to have aerial footage of the wreckage site, and he told me that he had a small chopper that could take me up. I then flew with the pilot over the wreckage site and took video. The camera manual and auto focus does not work properly. While in the air I could see the wreckage was located approximately 500 yards southwest of the runway. It appeared the plane had come from the Northwest, contacted the tundra, left a short debris field of plane parts and luggage and came to rest on it's belly. Smoke was still emanating from the wreckage as we passed over. The top part of the fuselage was burnt

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away. It was a blue plane and the emblem on the tail was of a polar bear, the emblem for Cape Smythe Airline.

After landing with the helicopter, I was met by Officer Turney who advised that he contacted several witnesses who stated the plane had come in without its landing gear and attempted to land on the runway, making contact with the runway. Where the short road from the vehicle staging area contacts the runway. He stated it had been on the ground briefly then went back in the air and ran the length of the runway, the landing gear came down, the plane nosed up in the air and attempted to turn left and then dove down into the ground.

Officer Munn advised me he had contacted five of the survivors, one of whom refused to give a statement and another couldn't talk right then. Per Officer Munn one of the survivors stated after the plane first made contact with the ground, he believed the one of the engines started to smoke. He also stated Search & Rescue were medevacing the survivors to various locations, some to Anchorage, some to Fairbanks, and some to Barrow, as they were being stabilized. He then handed me a list of the survivor names. I recognized one name, Ed Sanford, on the manifest as being a person I had known years prior. He was being loaded on the King Air to be sent to Fairbanks. I spoke to him briefly, though it appeared he was in shock. He did not give a statement.

At about 1935 hours, Cary Meier of FAA and I traveled the length of the runway. We were looking for any signs of the plane touching down, such as belly pod marks or propeller marks. Adjacent to where the short staging area road connects to the runway, we saw, near the middle of the runway, two white and blue marks. The left mark was more distinguishable than the right mark. I videotaped this area. Approximately a hundred feet before this, there was a scuff mark on the runway with no paint transfer, it appeared to be fresh and made by an unknown cause. This was directly in line with the two skid marks of what is believed to be paint transfer on the runway. Officer Brad Munn and I measured the paint skid marks from outside edge to outside edge and the measurement was approximately two foot three and a half inches. Each line was approximately two inches and the left skid mark was about 41 feet 3 inches long. This was videotaped.

I observed two rocks, one in each skid mark that appeared to have paint transfer on them. Each was marked as evidence A1 and A2. A1 was from the right skid mark and A2 was from the left. These two rocks were collected at approximately 2006 hours. Cary Meier and I walked this portion of the runway looking for marks that may have occurred by the props touching the tarmac. We were unable to find any evidence that the props had touched the runway.

A 100-foot measuring tape was given to Officer Munn who was instructed to work with Officer Early and measure the incident scene, the debris field, and where the bodies were located in the plane. Officer Munn was also instructed to make a diagram of the incident scene. He was

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also provided the video camera and asked to have Officer Early video tape the scene. This videotape contains the aerial footage, two skid marks on the tarmac, and crash site before the bodies were removed. This tape was logged into evidence.

At approximately 2130 hours, I arrived at the crash site. Accompanying me was Cary Meier of FAA, Wayne G. Meyer Director of Operations for Cape Smythe, and Curt Pfeiffer Chief Pilot for Cape Smythe. In the debris field we located the belly pod, this is an attachment to the piper that is fixed on the bottom of the plane to carry cargo. On the bottom of the belly pod, I observed it had white and blue painting. There was a portion of the paint disturbed and appeared it may have made contact with gravel. A measurement of the width of this was taken. It measured two feet four inches wide. Which is consistent with the marks that were found on the runway. As well, a paint chip was secured from the belly pod and listed as item number A3. Items A1, A2, and A3 were sent to Alaska State Crime Lab for verification.

It began getting dark due to the cloud cover and late hour. I made arrangements with Search & Rescue to transport the bodies to Barrow once we had extracted them from the scene. As I approached the wreckage, I observed that the top fuselage was burnt away. I observed that when the plane came to a stop, it was pointing southeast. Officer Munn advised that he had made a diagram of the scene, and that they were unable to identify the bodies but had numbered them starting with the person closest to the front of the plane as being number one, and number two to the left and behind number one, directly across the plane was number three and the individual found near the tail section on the left side of the plane was number four. The position that these individuals were found is depicted in the video that Officer Early took. Also refer to Ofc. Munn's scene diagram for further details.

At approximately 2215 hours, Officers Kevin Early, Kelly Turney, Brad Munn and I began to work on removing the bodies from the wreckage. Beginning with person number four. We marked the body bags, and tagged them with evidence tags having the number of their location. Then we removed number two, then we removed number one, and finally removed number three. When number two was extracted, he was missing a hand. Number three was missing a lower portion of a leg. The wreckage was searched through, looking for these items, and we were unable to find them at that time. The next day, when we returned to the wreckage after the wind had blown a good portion of the ashes away, we were able to locate those two items; which were later sent to a funeral home that was taking care of these two individuals.

The bodies were loaded on a NSB/ Search and Rescue Chopper and Ofc. Early escorted them to Barrow. Security was set up for the next couple of days by us and by NSB/ Fire Department personnel. Later that night, I contacted the Fire Department, and Isaac Kaigelak relieved us from the scene and watched it until he was relieved by Officer Kelly Turney in the morning.

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I then went to the Nuiqsut station and briefed Lt. Grimes, via phone, as to our investigation to that point.

On 09/19/00 at approximately 1000 hours, I was advised the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) had arrived in Barrow and were flying to Nuiqsut to see the scene. That afternoon Scott Erickson, Air Safety Investigator, with NTSB and Wayne G. Meier of Cape Smythe arrived in Nuiqsut and were given a short briefing. We traveled to the scene. On the way to the crash site, we stopped by the two skid marks that were on the runway for them to observe.

The wreckage site was approximately 500 yards from the runway, over tundra, and had a small marshy wet gully, which we used four-wheelers to cross. Upon arriving at the scene, I observed a spot where the tundra was turned up. It appeared this is where plane had first made contact with the ground. Continuing on the path of the plane, after a short distance, I saw small parts of the plane and luggage scattered. A short distance from this, the left wing was in the debris field then an engine with the props, then the plane had come to a stop. The right wing was on the left side of the plane. The plane had come to a stop belly down. Most of the fuselage and right wing was burnt away. The bottom of the plane, and the tail section, was still intact. The tundra around the plane for approximately 20 feet, was burnt. No items found in the debris field from point of impact to within 20 feet of the plane showed signs of fire. See the video footage that Officer Early did for details about the crash site. The North Slope Borough Police Department assisted NTSB with security of the scene until NTSB was done with their investigation.

On 02/20/00, I contacted Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak and she came to the station. She stated she was a witness to the flight and to the crash. I then conducted an interview with her.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: AHTUANGARAU, Rosemary [REDACTED] Taped 09/20/00 1056 hrs

Rosemary stated on the day of the crash, she was at her house, which is located north of the runway, and she had full view of the runway. She said also parked at her house was Glen Taleak, and they were talking as the Cape Smythe plane approached. She stated that Glen noticed first the landing gear was not down. She looked, and she could see that the landing gear was not down as well. She doesn't recall when the plane had touched down, or if it had touched down. She stated the plane continued along the runway and sounded like it was gaining speed. At approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ down the runway, the landing gear started coming down. She stated the plane was approximately 50 feet off the ground when it did. She then heard the plane slow down and nosed up, continuing to climb to about 100 feet. The plane then turned left and began to lose altitude. She stated it looked like the pilot was trying to level the plane. as it turned, banking left, it started to level out before it made contact with the tundra. Left wing into the tundra first, then the nose impacted. She stated it then cartwheeled.

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She stated she did not observe any engine troubles, or smoke, or anything coming from the engines, until after it made contact with the ground. She stated the plane appeared to be in flames directly after impact with the ground. She stated she did not observe it come to a full rest as she took off to call PSO and headed to the clinic to help if there were any survivors. She was the health aide and has training in that area.

She saw vehicles at the tarmac staging area. She recalls that there was a white truck, she doesn't recall if it was a UIC or DMS truck; but it was a crew-cab pickup. She also observed the senior vehicles a green car and van. She stated Rita and George's truck was there also, and that was all she could recall.

INVESTIGATION (CON'T):

At approximately 1110 hours, Erna Brown came to the station, with a friend of hers, Gloria Jimenez. Erna stated she is the Cape Smythe agent and she witnessed the plane crash. Scott Erickson and Cynthia L. Keegan, Survival Factors Engineer, for NTSB and Charles Little of the Piper plane company, and Wayne G. Meyer arrived at the Nuiqsut Station. Keegan of NTSB was present during this interview.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: BROWN, Erna
JIMENEZ, Gloria

[REDACTED] Taped 1115 hrs. 9/20/00

Erna and Gloria both stated they observed the plane coming in with no landing gear. It touched down once and continued down the runway, then the landing gear came down. They stated it made approximately 100 feet in the air then began to bank left. Then it appeared to them that it went straight down. They stated there was a lot of distance from the plane to them, but they did see smoke and flames. They stated they did believe the left side went in first and then the nose. They stated they were located behind the vehicle from Kuukpik, which was located at the gate. The Kuukpik hotel's vehicle was a white crew-cab truck. They stated Dave, the manager for Kuukpik hotel, was in the vehicle with a passenger, they weren't sure who the passenger was. They also saw Jobe Kasak, Rhoda Sikvayugak, Annie Lampe, and Chris (she doesn't know his last name), the assistant AC Store Manager, who was also there at the tarmac when the plane came in and crashed.

INVESTIGATION (CON'T):

Officers Munn, Turney and I met and discussed what we knew about the investigation up to this point. I then contacted Lt. Don Grimes and gave him a briefing as to what we knew. Chris Engle, who was identified as the AC Store Manager, then came to the station for an interview. Keegan of NTSB was present during this interview.

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INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: ENGLE, Chris [REDACTED] Taped 09/20/00 1556 hrs.

Chris stated he and Winford Ipalook had front row seats at the tarmac; they were directly behind the gate waiting for the Cape Smythe plane to come in. He stated he observed it to come in on approach and he could see that the landing gear was not down. He stated directly out from where the planes staging area road connects to the runway, the plane made contact for a brief time on the runway, and then continued down the length of the runway. He stated as it reached approximately 150 feet, the landing gear came down. He stated it turned left and then nosed into the ground from what he could tell. He stated he was sitting inside his vehicle, with his window up but he could hear the engine and it sounded like it had full power all the time. He did not believe that it had stalled. He stated he drove back to the store and Winford Ipalook told him he was going to contact the Police Department.

INVESTIGATION (CONT):

On 9/20/00 at approximately 1650 hours, Lt. Don Grimes called me and stated the Police department had received a phone call from the State Medical Examiner's office. It was explained to him that they had identified the four deceased individuals. Person number one (ref: the diagram) was found to be Jason Leo Ostendorf, Cape Smythe Pilot, DOB [REDACTED], person number two was Gerald Kost, DOB [REDACTED], Person number three was Chris Gibson, DOB [REDACTED]. And person number four was Kenneth Leavitt, DOB [REDACTED]. I was advised that these individuals appeared to have survived the plane crash and had perished due to smoke and fire inhalation. I was also advised that Mark Reardon, the most severely burned survivor of the incident, had been flown to Harborview Burn Center in Seattle, Washington (206) 284-2876.

Lt. Grimes informed me the NTSB investigating unit would be handling all further investigation into the incident and we were to continue by assisting them by means of security, transportation, locating witnesses, etc.

At about 1730 hours, Scott Erickson, Cynthia L. Keegan, Charles Little, Wayne G. Meyer, Officers Munn, Turney and I returned to the crash site. We stood by as the NTSB investigating unit began working. About one hour later NTSB, Investigating supervisor Scott Erickson advised me the incident scene was being given over to Cape Smythe, as the airline agency is responsible for taking care of the wreckage.

I then contacted Cape Smythe Operations Manager, Wayne G. Meyer, who was on site. He stated his company would be picking up the two engines and the props to send them to a Piper company hanger in Canada and those were the only two items that needed to be secured. I explained that our Department would help in picking up the personal belongings and luggage that was in the debris field. We would secure it and put it in his plane so his company could list these items for survivors and family members that may want to collect these items.

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Officers Munn, Turney, and I then went to the debris field and conducted a grid search. As luggage and personal effects were located, we put them in plastic bags. Some backpacks and luggage were still intact and not put in plastic bags. A total of 14 bags were seized. All bags were weighed and the combined weight was approximately 195 pounds. These bags were put on the a Cape Smythe plane that Wayne G. Meyer had flown into Nuiqsut that day. I traveled with this plane later that same evening, along with NTSB personnel, back into Barrow.

On 09/25/00 at approximately 0830 hours, Sgt. Owen advised me that Mark Reardon, who had been taken to the Seattle Burn Center, was rumored to have passed away. He then contacted the Harborview Burn Center and it was confirmed that at 0001 hours, on Sunday the 24th, Mark Reardon had succumbed to the injuries he incurred from the plane crash.

Items seized during this investigation that were sent to the State Crime Lab:

- 1) Rock from right skid mark A1 tag #36805.
- 2) Rock from left skid mark A2 tag #36806.
- 3) Paint chip from Belly Pod of plane A3 tag #36807.

Additional items I seized and tagged as evidence:

- 4) Micro-cassette tape of three interviews- tag #36808.
- 5) VHS videotape with evidence and scene footage- tag #27702.
- 6) Two tapes from the dispatch center- tag #27701.

After collecting initial survivor interviews, witness interviews, collecting evidence and surveying the scene, this what is believed to have occurred.

On Monday, September 18, 2000 at approximately 1500 hours, flight #181, a 1040 Piper N220CS, a Cape Smythe passenger plane, from Prudhoe Bay, approached the Northeast end of the runway in the village of Nuiqsut, Alaska. The approach seemed normal, save the landing gear not being deployed. This is for an unknown reason at this time. It dissented normally and touched down briefly during the first quarter of the runway. The belly pod portion of the plane contacted the surface of the tarmac. The plane then lifted and continued traveling along the runway gaining speed and altitude. When it was approximately 2/3rds down the runway the landing gear came down. The plane nosed up and climbed to about 100 feet, while losing speed. It then began to bank left and lose altitude rapidly, while attempting to level out. At about 500 yards from the Southwest end of the runway, it contacted the tundra at an angle. It skidded a short distance, losing the belly pod, luggage, personal effects, landing gear, left wing, and small plane parts, then rolled and came to a stop approximately 75 yards after first contacting the tundra. It came to a rest on its belly and immediately burst into flames. Passengers Susie Napageak and Ed Sanford Jr. escaped out the left rear exit. Greg Noble, Shawn Morgan, Steve Hastings, and Mark Reardon escaped out the right front exit. These people sustained injuries of variant degrees. Mr. Reardon sustained burns over 50% of his body and succumbed to his injuries 6 days later, while at Harberview Burn Center. The other

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four people aboard: Pilot Jason Ostendorf, Gerald Kost, Christopher Gibson, and Kenneth Leavitt succumbed to the smoke and fire at the site of the plane crash.

The approach, and eventual crash, of flight 181 Cape Smythe Airlines was witnessed by several people located either at their house, next to the airstrip, or at the airstrip staging area waiting for it to land. Some of the people at the staging area responded immediately to the crash site and were followed by Fire Fighters and Police Officers. Rescue efforts began within approximately 5 minutes of the plane crash. First to arrive on scene were Brandon Cox and Dave Demarias. Over 30 fire extinguishers were used to put out the fire around the plane. The survivors, after being stabilized at the local health clinic, were medivaced, via NSB/ Search & Rescue, to hospitals in Barrow, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. Alpine security personnel provided security.

FAA Cary Meier, Ofc. Kevin Early and I arrived via NSB/ Search & Rescue from Barrow at about 1640 hours. We processed the scene and at about 2230 that evening the deceased were flown via NSB/ Search & Rescue to Barrow.

The North Slope Borough Police Department began an investigation obtaining initial statements from the survivors, interviewing witnesses, and collecting evidence. The investigation was turned over to the NTSB a couple days later.

Further details can be obtained by seeing reports from Officers Musgrave, Turney, Munn, Early, and Grimes. As well, reports from FAA and NTSB personnel.

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INITIAL DETAILS:

On Monday, September 18, 2000, at about 3:00 pm, Officer Kelly Turney called me over the radio to report that there had been a plane crash.

INVESTIGATION:

I immediately ran to the window and looked outside. I observed a large cloud of black smoke coming from the far end of the runway. As I was getting dressed to respond to the scene, I heard the ambulance being toned to the scene. I ran outside, got into the truck and drove to the end of the runway. I observed that several other emergency vehicles were parked on the side of the runway. I parked the truck and looked out across the tundra. I observed that a plane had crashed and was on fire. I estimated that the crash site was about 1/8th of a mile from the edge of the runway. I exited the truck and ran to the crash site.

As I was running to the site, I observed several rescue workers helping people in different areas around the plane. I heard Officer Turney notify the clinic over the radio that there were several people injured, one possible critical, and for them to be prepared to treat them. It took me about three minutes to get to the crash site from the runway. When I arrived at the crash site, the scene was very active. There were fireman and rescue personnel treating people. I observed people from the Department of Municipal Services, Kuukpik Corporation, and the School District helping care for the injured and bringing medical supplies. When I arrived at the plane I contacted Officer Turney and I observed that the fire had burned the top off the plane.

Officer Turney advised me that there were three confirmed dead, maybe four, and five injured. Officer Turney also stated that he was told that there were nine in the plane. I looked at the plane and observed one body on the right side of the plane that had been burned. I called Barrow and spoke with Sgt. Datta to advise him of the situation. Sgt. Datta advised me that Search and Rescue was in route. As I looked around the plane, I observed another body on the left side of the plane by the tail. Someone then told me that there were ten people aboard the plane.

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INVESTIGATION (cont.):

Officer Turney and I took control of the scene to help secure the scene. We advised everyone not to touch the wreckage. I then assisted some of the firemen in loading a victim onto a backboard. During that time, several people arrived on four-wheeler and the Fire Department began to transport the injured to the runway. They were then transported to the clinic by ambulance and personal vehicles.

Due to the fact that the crash was so far from the runway, fire extinguishers had to be used to put out the fire. I later learned it took over thirty extinguishers to put out the fire. While the Fire Department was putting out the fire, and after the injured had been transported to the clinic, I went back to the runway and advised people to clear the runway because there were rescue planes coming. Once the runway was clear, I drove over and parked on the tarmac to keep the runway clear for the Search and Rescue plans.

At about 4:30 pm, a helicopter from Alpine with by Craig Dotson, Walter Bonner, and two other medical personnel arrived at the airport. They stated that they were here to help and that they were flying over more medical personnel to assist. I advised them to go to the clinic to help assist with the injured.

At about 4:40 pm, one of the North Slope Borough Search and Rescue planes arrived in Nuiqsut. I contacted Sgt. John Datta and Officer Kevin Early at the airport. I also contacted Cary Meier with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). I drove them to the police station where Officer Turney and I gave them a brief narrative of what had occurred. After the briefing, I went to the Nuiqsut Health Clinic to interview the injured survivors of the crash. The first person I interviewed was Greg Noble. Noble was awake, but seemed to be in some pain. I asked him to tell me what he could remember about the crash.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: NOBLE, Greg [REDACTED] Taped 9-18-00 5:25 pm

Noble stated that when the plane went in to land it didn't sound like the wheels were down. He then stated the pilot started back up and banked way too steep. He then said they just started diving. He said they stalled when they banked too steep. Noble said he was sitting in the middle on the left. He said got out by helping a kid open the door. He stated he thought the guy was the cook. He said they went out through an emergency exit to his right. He said he helped him pull the handle. Noble also said the guy was on fire. He said that once he was out of the plane they stumbled around and he put the fire out on the other guy.

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INVESTIGATION (cont.):

After talking with Noble, I went into another room at the clinic and spoke with another one of the injured, Ed Sanford. Sanford was awake and willing to speak with me about the incident.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: SANFORD, Ed Jr. 1[REDACTED] Taped 9/18/00 5:29 pm

Sanford said they were coming in from the North and when they touched down the plane went sort of sideways. Sanford said he thought that they didn't get a good approach. He then said the pilot went full throttle and went back up, and got the plane more stable as it went back up. Sanford said the pilot banked left and he could feel a little turbulence. Sanford said the lady next to him looked at him with a scared look on her face. Sanford said the left engine then caught fire while they were in the air.

Sanford said he was sitting in the right side seat of the tail section of the plane. Sanford said that he walked out of the plane once it was on the ground. He said he didn't have to open any doors. He just unbuckled his belt and walked out. He said there were a lot of flames at the front of the plane. Sanford said the lady next to him got out and she was hurting, so he went to see how she was doing. Sanford said he went back to see if he could get anybody out of the plane, but said he was hurting too bad. He said he got out of the plane on the left side. Sanford said he walked out to where the rescue people found him.

Sanford stated that he did not see, or hear, anything before he saw the engine catch on fire. Sanford said that he did hear a gravel sound when the plane touched down. He said that when the plane started to bank was when he looked over and saw flames in the engine. He said by then the plane was out of control and the pilot nosed it hard left. He then said that he couldn't believe this was happening.

After speaking with Sanford, I was contacted by Roger Anderson. Anderson assisted me with the names and location of the injured people in the clinic. I then went to the emergency room and contacted Steve Hastings.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: HASTINGS, Steve [REDACTED] Taped 9/18/00 5:37 pm

Hastings said he was sitting on the right side of the plane. He said he was kind of sleeping and woke up when the plane went down and touched the runway.

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INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS (cont)

Hastings said he thought they were going to stop, but all of a sudden they kept going. Hastings said they went up thirty, forty, or maybe a hundred feet. He then said the plane started banking to the left. Hasting said he didn't know why they were turning around so quickly. He then said that the pilot pulled it back to the right and then it was obvious that the pilot didn't have control.

Hastings said he remembers the plane going to the left and then to the right before it crashed. He stated that the wheels must have been down, but for some reason the pilot had to go around. Hasting said after they hit the ground that he had trouble breathing. He then said that once he caught his breath, he knew he had to get out of the plane. He could not remember if he blacked out and was not sure if he crawled out of the plane or if someone helped him out.

Hastings said he remembers seeing a rescue worker responding to the call, but did not know who it was. Hastings said he was sitting on the right side of the plane and got out through a window that was broken open. He said he did not see any smoke or fire before they crashed, only afterwards.

INVESTIGATION (cont.):

After talking with Hastings in the emergency room, I learned that Mark Reardon was the other injured person in the room. I was unable to interview Reardon because they were preparing him to be transported out of town. I left the emergency room and contacted Susie Napageak in another examining room in the clinic. I identified myself to Napageak and asked her if she would talk to me about the crash. Napageak shook her head no. I left the room and contacted the last injured survivor, Shawn Morgan. Morgan agreed to speak with me.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: MORGAN, Shawn [REDACTED] Taped 9/18/00 5:53 pm

Morgan said that when they landed he heard gravel scratching the plane and they then went back. He said that they went like this (I observed him indicate to the left with his hand) and then the plane went down. Morgan said that he was sitting at the emergency exit on the right side. Morgan said that Gerald was sitting right in front of him. Morgan said he just ran to get out of the plane. He said that he thinks the window was open. He said he remembers seeing people lying in the grass.

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INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS (cont)

He also said he remembers seeing two guys that had got out, or were trying to get out. Morgan said he did not see any smoke or fire before the plane crashed. Morgan said he remembers the pilot looking over and asked for a count or something. Morgan said he could not understand what was said. He said it was pretty quiet.

INVESTIGATION (cont.):

After I finished interviewing the injured passengers, I returned to the airport and contacted Sgt. Datta. I advised that all but two of the survivors had been interviewed and why.

After some of the injured survivors were flown out of Nuiqsut, I assisted Sgt. Datta in gathering evidence from the runway. I drew a sketch of the scene and helped take measurements of the skid marks left by the plane on the runway. The skid marks were approximately two feet, three and a half inches apart and forty-one feet, three inches long. I observed several traces of blue paint on the rocks in the runway. I seized two of the rocks, one from each skid mark, and they were later logged into evidence. I also took several pictures of the area that were also logged into evidence.

After assisting Sgt. Datta, I went to the crash site with Officer Turney. Officer Early was at the site taking pictures and video taping the scene. Officer Turney and I found the belly pod of the plane and measured it. The belly pod was approximately two feet four inches wide. I then took a sample of the paint from the bottom of the belly pod and it was later logged into evidence. I also took photos of the belly pod and the spot where I retrieved the paint sample. The roll of film was later logged into evidence. Officer Turney and I then went to the plane and numbered the bodies. I then drew a sketch of the plane. Officer Turney and I then took measurements of the bodies' positions in, and around, the plane by using the plane's nose and tail as our reference points.

At about 9:30 pm, Sgt. Datta, Officer Early, Officer Turney and I began the process of removing the bodies from the wreckage and placing them into body bags. After a body was placed inside a body bag, I tagged the bag with a number to identify the position of the body in the plane as it was removed. I also wrote the number on the bag in case the tag was lost. As we removed body number two from the wreckage, we observed that it was missing a foot.

Approved By / Date:

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**North Slope Borough
Police Department**

Case Number: 00-001134

Reporting Person: Officer Brad Munn

Date: September 18, 2000

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe 181 - Supplement

INVESTIGATION (cont.):

We were unable to determine if the foot had been incinerated in the fire. I marked on the tag that body number two was missing a foot.

Once all the bodies were removed and tagged, we loaded them on the Search and Rescue helicopter and Officer Early transported them to Barrow. At about 11:30 pm, we left the crash site and had a volunteer guarding the site until we returned the next day.

On Tuesday, September 19, 2000, at about 10:30 am, Sgt. Datta, Officer Turney and I returned to the crash site. While we were at the site, I was looking at the wreckage and observed what I believed to be the burned remains of the foot from body number two that we had not recovered. I showed my findings to Sgt. Datta and Officer Turney, who agreed. We also found what we believed to be the burned remains of a hand from body number three. Both of the parts were bagged and tagged. They were stored in the morgue in Nuiqsut until they were shipped to Anchorage.

Later that day, Scott Erickson with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and Cary Meier with Federal Aviation Administration arrived in town. I transported them to the area of the runway where the plane touched down and then to the crash site. Once at the crash site, I remained on scene to help keep the area secure. When Erickson and Meier finished looking over the site, I helped transport them back to the police station before they left for Barrow that evening.

On Wednesday, September 20, 2000, at about 9:30 am, Scott Erickson and Cynthia Keegan, with the NTSB, and Charles Little, an Air Safety Investigator with Piper Aircraft, arrived in Nuiqsut. I helped transport them to the area of the runway where the plane first touched down and then to the crash site. I remained on scene with them. Later that afternoon, I helped Sgt. Datta and Officer Turney pick up the luggage, and other personal items that were found, and transport it from the crash site. These items were secured in our patrol vehicle. The items were later loaded onto a Cape Smythe plane and flown to Barrow.

At about 4:00 pm, I transported Keegan and Little back to the station. After they talked with Sgt. Datta, I was told that they were finished with the site and it was turned over to Cape Smythe for clean up. I then transported them to the airport.

End of Supplement report.

Approved By / Date:

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**North Slope Borough
Police Department**

Case Number: 00-001134

Reporting Person: Officer Kelly Turney

Date: 09-18-00

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe Flight #181

INITIAL DETAILS:

On September 18, 2000, at about 1504 hours, I was notified of a plane crash at the Nuiqsut Airport.

INVESTIGATION:

I immediately left the station and proceeded to the airport in my patrol vehicle. Upon reaching the runway area, I observed a large cloud of black smoke, out on the tundra near the far west end of the runway. I also observed several vehicles and individuals speeding to, and running to, that area. Upon arriving at the end of the runway, I observed flames and what appeared to be the fuselage of an airplane. I notified Officer Munn via radio that there indeed had been a plane crash and to respond to the area. I then contacted Barrow Dispatch to have the Fire Department and Ambulance crews toned out to respond. I also advised them to notify Sgt. Datta and Capt. Venable of the plane crash.

The crash site is approximately 1/8th of a mile south of the runway. There is no road access to the crash site. I ran on the tundra, and across a small wetland area with standing water, to the crash site. Upon arriving I observed a dark blue color and white polar bear on the rear tale section of the plane. I knew through previous knowledge the plane belonged to Cape Smythe Air Service. The main fuselage area of the plane was on fire and creating a large plume of black smoke. I observed a field of debris to the west (right) of the plane. While responding to the sight I observed several individuals, who appeared to be survivors, around the wreckage. I observed a native female and a male to the left about 75 feet from the tail section of the plane they were lying down. I observed a male directly in front of me who was seated on the tundra about 150 feet from the fuselage. I observed another male to the right of the plane located in the middle of the debris field. Finally I observed a male who was being pulled from the nose section of the fuselage and was placed on the tundra about 25 feet from the fuselage.

I was advised by Stan Kosmicki, who had called Cape Smythe in Prudhoe Bay, that there were ten people on board the plane. While speaking with Kosmicki, I observed Dave Demarias and Brandon Cox to be assisting with the injured. I walked over to the wreckage and saw four bodies of deceased individuals in, or near, the plane that were badly burned. I advised the rescue units of the bodies and the need to preserve the scene as much as possible for investigators. I assisted in notifying the clinic of the injuries and the need for more medical supplies. The rescue units transferred the injured to the clinic and I stood by at the scene. The Fire Department brought fire extinguishers to the scene, and I assisted in attempting to put out the fire near the fuselage.

**North Slope Borough
Police Department**

Case Number: 00-001134

Reporting Person: Officer Kelly Turney

Date: 09-18-00

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe Flight #181

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

Sgt. Datta arrived with the first Search and Rescue plane and I briefed him of the situation. Sgt. Datta advised me to contact and interview first responders and eyewitnesses to the crash. I went to the Kuukpik Hotel and conducted the following interviews with Brandon Cox and Jim Morris.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: COX, Brandon [REDACTED] TAPED 09-21-00 1715

Cox stated that he was in the truck with Dave Demarias and Jim Morris waiting because he was to get on that plane to go to Barrow. He observed the plane circle once and it looked like he (pilot) was looking at the windsock. The plane came in and Cox said he noticed the landing gear was not down. The plane came in and tapped it's belly on the runway. Cox figured the landing gear was stuck so after it pulled up, the landing gear came down. Cox said that the plane's belly touched about ¼ down the runway. The plane pulled up and banked left. It looked like the pilot was trying to pull it out and it crashed. Cox stated that it looked like the left wing hit the ground first. He felt like the plane had just about flattened out and was perpendicular to the runway. Cox stated that when he ran out to the plane, he saw a woman and a man about 50 to 75 feet from the plane. He said that he and Morris pulled Mark (Reardon) further away from the plane. Cox said that Reardon was about ten feet from the plane when they got to him and that he was still on fire. Cox said that it looked like most of the survivors were thrown from the plane. He only saw one person, the guy with the broken nose, standing or walking away when he arrived. Cox said that he had the windows down in the truck while they were waiting for the plane to land, and he did not notice any unusual noises. Further he stated that it sounded like the engines were still running on the plane.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: MORRIS, Jim [REDACTED] TAPED 09-21-00 1732

Morris said that the plane circled around one time. When the plane came in for the landing he, and others, noticed the landing gear was not down. Morris said that the plane skid on its belly for a second and then the landing gears came down. He said that he saw the plane power up and then the plane nose-dived off when it was turning left. Morris said that the plane looked like it landed on its left wing. He, and others, ran out to the plane and he immediately noticed one person standing to the right of the plane. He did not see anyone to the left of the plane until he got closer. Then he saw three people on the left. Morris stated that Reardon was on fire when they arrived. They pulled him further away from the fire and told the other survivors to sit down and relax. Morris stated that the plane seemed heavy and just did not have enough power to pull out all the way.

10/17/00 TEL 09139 FAX 9074806329
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Case Number: 00-001134

Reporting Person: Officer Kelly Turney

Date: 09-18-00

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe Flight #181

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

I then went to the Nuiqsut Clinic in an attempt to interview more witnesses to the plane crash. There I interviewed Rhoda Sikvayugak and Dave Demarias.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: SIKVAYUGAK, Rhoda [REDACTED] TAPED 09-18-00 1754

Sikvayugak stated that she was at the airport with the senior van waiting for the plane when she noticed the plane trying to land without its wheels down. She said the plane touched the ground for a bit, and then as it was turning, it straightened out a little and then crashed. Sikvayugak said that the front of the plane hit the ground first when it crashed. Also she said that right after the plane came up, after touching the ground without its wheels, the landing gear came down. She said that she thought the engines were running before the plane crashed.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: DEMARIAS, Dave [REDACTED] TAPED 09-18-00 1800

Demarias said that he had Morris and Cox in his truck while they were waiting for the plane to land. He saw the plane make a circle before coming in to land. When it came in he noticed that the plane did not have its landing gear down. Demarias said that he saw the belly of the plane touch on the runway for about 50 or 100 feet and then the plane took back off. About ¾ down the runway the landing gear came down and the plane started to bank to the left. Then the plane went down and crashed. He said that it looked like the left side (wing) of the plane hit first and then the plane may have rolled. Demarias said that he did not see any smoke or fire coming from the plane before it crashed. He then took off in the truck out to the scene of the crash. When he got to the crash site he saw Sean (Morgan) standing up and walking. He sat Morgan down and saw Cox pulling (Mark) Reardon away from the plane. Demarias said that he went over and helped pull Reardon further away from the fire and wreckage. It looked like Reardon was already out of the plane and was near the front right part of the fuselage.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

Later in the evening on 09-18-00, Officer Munn and I returned to the crash scene to measure the positions of the bodies in reference to the plane. At about 2130 hours, I assisted Officer Munn, Officer Early and Sgt. Datta with the removal of four bodies from the wreckage. There were three badly burned bodies in the plane and one body that was burned outside of the plane near the left tail section. The bodies were numbered as to their position in the plane starting with the pilot's seat, then the co-pilot's seat, left front seat (behind the pilot) and finally the body outside the plane. At about 2300 hours the bodies were transported by Search and Rescue to Barrow with Officer Early accompanying the bodies.

Reporting Person: Officer Kelly Turney

Date: 09-18-00

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe Flight #181

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED:

The plane was still smoldering and was hot until the next morning. When arriving on scene the next morning, Officers discovered a human hand, belonging to Chris Gibson, and foot, belonging to Gerald Kost, inside the wreckage. With the condition of the bodies that were recovered and the position that the remains were found, they were identified and shipped to Anchorage to the funeral home.

I assisted the other agencies and watched the scene over a two day period until the NTSB was finished with their on-scene investigation. I also assisted in bagging and securing all personal effects from the plane and turning them over to Cape Smythe Air Service. Three bottles of alcohol were discovered at the scene and these items were seized. The bottles appeared to have been checked with other personal effects and were all unopened and sealed.

On September 22, 2000, I conducted an interview with Stan Kosmicki. On September 25, 2000, I conducted interviews with David Pausanna, Hannah Pausanna, David Pausanna Jr. and Christopher Engle. All these individuals were witnesses to the plane crash.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: KOSMICKI, Stan [REDACTED] TAPED 09-22-00 1327

Kosmicki stated that when he observed the Cape Smythe flight come in to land, it landed on it's cargo pod, and the landing gear was not down. He said the plane then appeared to give full power, pulled up, and when the plane got to the end of the runway, it started to bank to the left. Kosmicki felt the plane gained about 150 feet of altitude and the wheels came down. He said then the plane went into a stall and fell to the left just before it hit the ground. Further that the plane just about leveled off, and the right side of the plane may have hit first because he saw a piece of the plane come off. Kosmicki then called 911 on his cell phone and went to the crash scene. Kosmicki said he called Cape Smythe in Deadhorse to see how many people were on the plane and was told ten. He said that he saw six people on the ground and knew that there were four people inside the wreck. Kosmicki stated that he did not see any fire, or smoke, from the engines before it crashed and that the engines did not make any unusual noises.

**North Slope Borough
Police Department**

Case Number: 00-001134

Reporting Person: Officer Kelly Turney

Date: 09-18-00

Case Title: Plane Crash - Cape Smythe Flight #181

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: ENGLE, Christopher [REDACTED] TAPED 09-25-00 1859

Engle stated that he was waiting for the plane to come in, as he was going to pick up freight for the AC Store. He stated that the plane came in and tried to land with no wheels. The plane then took back off, came back around, and then crashed. Engle stated that he could not see the plane strike the ground as his field of vision was blocked. He said he did not see any smoke, or fire, coming from the plane before it struck the ground and did not notice any strange noises. Engle said that he thought the plane struck the runway in about the middle and was on the ground for about 200 feet prior to it taking back off again. He felt the plane gained about 200 feet of altitude before it crashed.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: PAUSANNA, David [REDACTED] TAPED 09-25-00 1912
PAUSANNA, Hanah [REDACTED] TAPED 09-25-00 1912

David spoke in most of the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, I asked Hannah if her observations differed from David's. She stated they didn't, and that she saw what David saw. David said the plane came in from the East and when it came to land, the landing gear was not down. The plane touched down, it looked like twice, on the runway and then when it went back up the landing gear came down. The plane went up real quick, gained about 100 to 150 feet of altitude and then it turned left and started to go down. David said the plane leveled off a little bit before it hit the ground. David and Hannah ran out to the plane and saw the smoke and fire. David said that they went to the right side of the plane because that is where the most critically injured people were. He noticed that all the people were already out of the plane when he got there and that one of them (Mark Reardon) was badly burned. He then assisted in getting the injured to the clinic.

INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS: PAUSANNA JR., David [REDACTED] TAPED 09-25-00 1925

Jr. stated that he was standing next to his father's truck when he heard his father say that the plane was coming in with no landing gear down. He continued by saying the plane came in, touched the ground real quick, and then took back off. Jr. said that he looked away for a second and saw the plane heading down. He said after the plane crashed he got on his radio and called for the Fire Department. Jr. said that he ran out to the plane and helped out with the injured.

Reporting Person: Kevin S. Early

Date: 09/19/00

Case Title: Death Investigation - Supplemental

INITIAL DETAILS:

Monday, September 18, 2000, at approximately 1500, Lt. Grimes advised me that Search & Rescue aircraft was waiting to depart for Nuiqsut regarding a downed Cape Smythe airplane. Sgt. Datta and I collected our gear and quickly made our way to S&R. We arrived in Nuiqsut just before 1700, observed the smoldering aircraft several hundred yards south of the airstrip, and met with Officers Turney and Munn to plan tasks necessary for the investigation.

INVESTIGATION:

I remained at the office and coordinated information with Barrow supervisors; Sgt. Datta went with an Alpine-provided helicopter to take video footage from the air, and Officers Turney and Munn identified and interviewed witnesses and survivors of the crash.

As the other officers were completing their tasks, I walked to the crash site with FAA inspector Carey Meier. I photographed the debris field, the aircraft and parts strewn about, and the bodies at the scene using a 35mm camera; seven rolls of film were exposed to be entered into evidence.

I next met briefly with the other officers on the airstrip, and returned to the crash site with Officers Munn and Turney via four-wheelers. I videotaped the crash site, continuing on the same tape Sgt. Datta used from the helicopter. I assisted Munn and Turney in measuring and drawing a diagram of the aircraft fuselage and the position of the bodies.

Sgt. Datta met with us again at the airstrip, and the four of us recovered the bodies and placed each in body bags; the body bags were labeled 1 through 4, their positions relative to the aircraft fuselage noted on the diagram. The bodies were burned to the degree that on-scene identification was not possible.

The Search and Rescue helicopter came to the crash site and the bodies were loaded for transport to Barrow. I flew to Barrow with the bodies, and was met upon landing by Lt. Grimes. The bodies were placed in the MIRT van and secured overnight as the van was locked and parked at the Police Department.

Reporting Person: Officer Cody Musgrave

Date: September 19, 2000

Case Title: Supplement

INITIAL DETAILS:

On Tuesday, September 19, 2000, around 0930 hours, I received information through Officer Turney that Sgt. Datta wanted a report of my observations and conversations with Jason Ostendorf as I flew from Nuiqsut to Kaktovik on 09/14/00.

INVESTIGATION:

On 09/14/00 I flew on Cape Smythe from Nuiqsut to Kaktovik with a lay over in Prudhoe Bay. I was flying on business to relieve an officer in Kaktovik and to work there for a couple of weeks.

I boarded the plane in Nuiqsut and the pilot was Jason Ostendorf. The plane used was a blue twin engine Piper 1040. I sat in the rear of the plane on the right side. The weather from Nuiqsut to Prudhoe Bay had a cloud cover between 2000 and 4000 feet. We flew under the cloud cover and the flight was fairly smooth. When we arrived in Prudhoe Bay I was able to see that we were lining up to the runway for landing and about ¼ mile out the plane veered to the right. I looked on the runway for a plane either taxing or landing and then I looked in the sky to see if another plane was in the area. I didn't see one but really didn't think more about it. I then noticed that the plane went up and down three to five times. It was the type of lift and drop that gives you a feeling of weightlessness, and makes your stomach feel like it moves to your throat. We completed our circle and then landed the plane.

I deplaned in Prudhoe Bay and waited until Jason told me we were ready to fly to Nuiqsut. I was the only passenger and Jason gave me the choice of sitting next to him in the co-pilot seat or in regular seating. I chose to sit in the co-pilot seat. Before he started the engine he gave me a head set to plug in so that I could speak with him. We visited a little to make sure they worked. I listened to Jason clear with the tower and then taxi and take off. When we took off he asked me if I wanted to fly under the cloud cover to see the ground or go above them into the sun. I told him I wouldn't mind the sun and we went up. As we flew I began to visit more with Jason. I have visited with Jason a few times previously and felt comfortable talking to him.

We talked about several different things. We talked about how we both have had to make sure we maintain our homes as a desirable place to be by putting pictures up and having hobbies. We also talked about our last vacations and how he was in Utah during the exact days I was there and even the same places we went to. As we spoke I looked at all the instruments on the dash and noticed how nice the GPS was. I told Jason I wished I had a GPS that was as good as the one in the plane. He then showed me how to read it. I asked Jason how long it took him to get really comfortable flying the plane we were in. Although I don't recall how many hours he said I do recall him saying that it took a certain amount of hours to pass off on the plane and then it took him a lot longer to really feel comfortable with the plane but that he did feel comfortable flying it now.

Reporting Person: Officer Cody Musgrave

Date: September 19, 2000

Case Title: Supplement

Jason shared a couple of things with me that he didn't like about the airplane. He told me that it had plenty of power but that the wingspan was too short and that it didn't balance itself out like other planes do. He showed me how we were flying straight on the GPS and then he showed me how when he let go of the steering that the plane banked hard to the left. I did not need the GPS to know that we were going left. Jason then showed me how the autopilot on the airplane worked. He said it was not as good as other airplanes but that it did work. Jason set up the autopilot and let go of the steering. I felt and watched the plane on the GPS as it banked to the left and then banked to the right and back and forth. Jason explained to me that the system worked but that it way over corrected each time.

Jason also told me that the airplane we were in had problems with the landing gear in the summer. He told me that during the summer the dirt and gravel would get into the gears and make it stick. Jason said during the winter or on paved strips that it didn't get that problem. He asked me if I felt what he was doing right before landing in Prudhoe Bay with the plane going up and down. I recalled and told him I did. He said that he had to sometimes shake the plane to get the landing gear to lock in.

When we arrived to Kaktovik Jason circled the town and before we got on a landing pattern he told me that he hoped the landing gear would lock in easily this time. We went up and down one time, similar to that in Prudhoe Bay. Jason told me that the landing gear locked in and we landed without any problems.

On 09/18/00, I met the Cape Smythe plane in Kaktovik and helped Jason unload the plane. Jason Ostendorf was the pilot and he was flying the same blue twin engine Piper 1040 that I had flown on, on 09/14/00. I heard of the plane crash later that night.

Police Department

Reporting Person: Lt. Don Grimes

Date: 09/25/00

Case Title: Cape Smythe Plane Crash - Nuiqsut

INITIAL DETAILS:

On Monday, September 18, 2000, at approximately 1515 hours I was notified by dispatch that a Cape Smythe plane had crashed in Nuiqsut. Initial details indicated that there were several casualties and possible 4 deaths. I directed Sgt. Datta and Officer Early to immediately prepare for departure to Nuiqsut. Sgt. Datta was instructed to take charge of the investigation and Officer Early was to assist in the documenting and collection of evidence. I transported both officers to SAR where they departed at approximately 1600 hours.

INVESTIGATION:

At approximately 1610 hours I returned to the police station where I continued to direct and assist in the supportive needs of this case.

At 1635 hours I contacted the Medical Examiners Office and notified Investigator Kristena Herrera of the plane crash. Herrera authorized the removal of the bodies from the wreckage and requested that they be transported to Anchorage for autopsies. At 1750 hours I again contacted Herrera and provided her with additional information about the condition and location of the deceased victims of the crash.

On 09/19/00 at approximately 0010 hours I met the SAR helicopter returning from Nuiqsut with the four bodies and Officer Early. Officer Early and I transported the bodies to the police station where they were secured in the transport van at 0030 hours to be held overnight. At 0850 hours Sgt. Owen and I transported the bodies to Alaska Airlines for shipment to the Medical Examiners Office in Anchorage. The bodies were shipped on flight #144 of Alaska Airlines.